

§ 137.2 Congressional policy.

(a) According to section 2 of Pub. L. 106–260, Congress has declared that:

(1) The Tribal right of self-government flows from the inherent sovereignty of Indian Tribes and nations;

(2) The United States recognizes a special government-to-government relationship with Indian Tribes, including the right of the Indian Tribes to self-governance, as reflected in the Constitution, treaties, Federal statutes, and the course of dealings of the United States with Indian Tribes;

(3) Although progress has been made, the Federal bureaucracy, with its centralized rules and regulations, has eroded Tribal Self-Governance and dominates Tribal affairs.

(4) The Tribal Self-Governance Demonstration Project, established under title III of the Indian Self-Determination Act (ISDA) [25 U.S.C. 450f note] was designed to improve and perpetuate the government-to-government relationship between Indian Tribes and the United States and to strengthen Tribal control over Federal funding and program management;

(5) Although the Federal Government has made considerable strides in improving Indian health care, it has failed to fully meet its trust responsibilities and to satisfy its obligations to the Indian Tribes under treaties and other laws; and

(6) Congress has reviewed the results of the Tribal Self-Governance Demonstration Project and finds that transferring full control and funding to Tribal governments, upon Tribal request, over decision making for Federal PSFAs:

(i) Is an appropriate and effective means of implementing the Federal policy of government-to-government relations with Indian Tribes; and

(ii) Strengthens the Federal policy of Indian self-determination.

(b) According to section 3 of Pub. L. 106–260, Congress has declared its policy to:

(1) Permanently establish and implement Tribal Self-Governance within the DHHS;

(2) Call for full cooperation from the DHHS and its constituent agencies in the implementation of Tribal Self-Governance to—

(i) Enable the United States to maintain and improve its unique and continuing relationship with, and responsibility to, Indian Tribes;

(ii) Permit each Indian Tribe to choose the extent of its participation in self-governance in accordance with the provisions of the ISDA relating to the provision of Federal services to Indian Tribes;

(iii) Ensure the continuation of the trust responsibility of the United States to Indian Tribes and Indians;

(iv) Affirm and enable the United States to fulfill its obligations to the Indian Tribes under treaties and other laws;

(v) Strengthen the government-to-government relationship between the United States and Indian Tribes through direct and meaningful consultation with all Tribes;

(vi) Permit an orderly transition from Federal domination of programs and services to provide Indian Tribes with meaningful authority, control, funding, and discretion to plan, conduct, redesign, and administer PSFAs that meet the needs of the individual Tribal communities;

(vii) Provide for a measurable parallel reduction in the Federal bureaucracy as programs, services, functions, and activities (or portion thereof) are assumed by Indian Tribes;

(viii) Encourage the Secretary to identify all PSFAs of the DHHS that may be managed by an Indian Tribe under this Act and to assist Indian Tribes in assuming responsibility for such PSFAs; and

(ix) Provide Indian Tribes with the earliest opportunity to administer PSFAs from throughout the Department.

(c) According to section 512(a) of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa–11(a)], Congress has declared, except as otherwise provided by law, the Secretary shall interpret all Federal laws, Executive Orders, and regulations in a manner that will facilitate:

(1) The inclusion of PSFAs and funds associated therewith, in the agreements entered into under this section;

(2) The implementation of compacts and funding agreements entered into under this title; and

(3) The achievement of Tribal health goals and objectives.

(d) According to section 512(f) of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa-11(f)], Congress has declared that each provision of Title V and each provision of a compact or funding agreement shall be liberally construed for the benefit of the Indian Tribe participating in and any ambiguity shall be resolved in favor of the Indian Tribe.

(e) According to section 515(b) of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa-14(b)], Congress has declared that nothing in the Act shall be construed to diminish in any way the trust responsibility of the United States to Indian Tribes and individual Indians that exists under treaties, Executive orders, or other laws and court decisions.

(f) According to section 507(g) of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa-6(g)], Congress has declared that the Secretary is prohibited from waiving, modifying, or diminishing in any way the trust responsibility of the United States with respect to Indian Tribes and individual Indians that exists under treaties, Executive orders, other laws, or court decisions.

(g) According to section 515(c) of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa-14(c)], Congress has declared that the Indian Health Service (IHS) under this Act shall neither bill nor charge those Indians who may have the economic means to pay for services, nor require any Tribe to do so. Nothing in this section shall impair the right of the IHS or an Indian Tribe to seek recovery from third parties section 206 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act [25 U.S.C. 1621e], under section 1 of the Federal Medical Care Recovery Act [42 U.S.C. 2651], and any other applicable Federal, State or Tribal law.

(h) According to section 507(e) of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa-6(e)], Congress has declared that in the negotiation of compacts and funding agreements the Secretary shall at all times negotiate in good faith to maximize implementation of the self-governance policy. The Secretary shall carry out Title V in a manner that maximizes the policy of Tribal Self-Governance, and in a manner consistent with the purposes specified in section 3 of the Act.

§ 137.3 Effect on existing Tribal rights.

Nothing in this part shall be construed as:

(a) Affecting, modifying, diminishing, or otherwise impairing the sovereign immunity from suit enjoyed by Indian Tribes;

(b) Terminating, waiving, modifying, or reducing the trust responsibility of the United States to the Indian Tribe(s) or individual Indians. The Secretary must act in good faith in upholding this trust responsibility;

(c) Mandating an Indian Tribe to apply for a compact(s) or grant(s) as described in the Act; or

(d) Impeding awards by other Departments and agencies of the United States to Indian Tribes to administer Indian programs under any other applicable law.

§ 137.4 May Title V be construed to limit or reduce in any way the funding for any program, project, or activity serving an Indian Tribe under this or other applicable Federal law?

No, if an Indian Tribe alleges that a compact or funding agreement violates section 515(a) of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa-14(a)], the Indian Tribe may apply the provisions of section 110 of the Act [25 U.S.C. 450m-1].

§ 137.5 Effect of these regulations on Federal program guidelines, manual, or policy directives.

Unless expressly agreed to by the Self-Governance Tribe in the compact or funding agreement, the Self-Governance Tribe shall not be subject to any agency circular, policy, manual, guidance, or rule adopted by the IHS, except for the eligibility provisions of section 105(g) of the Act [25 U.S.C. 450j(g)] and regulations promulgated under section 517 of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa-16(e)].

§ 137.6 Secretarial policy.

In carrying out Tribal self-governance under Title V, the Secretary recognizes the right of Tribes to self-government and supports Tribal sovereignty and self-determination. The Secretary recognizes a unique legal relationship with Tribal governments as set forth in the Constitution of the